

## Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A system for assisting a user in developing a lighting system for a lighting project, comprising:

a tool being operative to provide assistance to the user in selecting the lighting system for the lighting project, the tool prompting the user for:

selecting a type of the lighting project,

providing characteristics describing the lighting project,

providing a set of criteria the user desires the lighting system to satisfy, and

selecting a component for the lighting system, wherein the tool presents the user with at least one component for the lighting system in response to the selection of the type, the characteristics, and the set of criteria; and

a design center including a plurality of images of lighting components and a plurality of images of background scenes, wherein the user may view any of the plurality of images of lighting components within any of the plurality of images of background scenes.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one component for the lighting system comprises a plurality of components for the lighting system.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the tool is for providing a first set of photometric data for a first component and a second set of photometric data for a second component, whereby the user may compare the first and second sets of photometric data.

4. The system of claim 2, wherein the tool is for providing a first set of financial data for a first component and a second set of financial data for a second component, whereby the user may compare the first and second sets of financial data.

5. The system of claim 2, wherein the tool is for visually comparing a first component and a second component.

6. The system of claim 1, wherein the tool is for receiving a copy of a site plan for the lighting project.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein the tool is for prompting the user to submit a proposal request for the lighting system and for receiving the proposal request from the user.

8. The system of claim 7, wherein the tool is for providing a proposal to the user.

9. The system of claim 8, wherein the tool is for posting the proposal for viewing over a computer network.

10. The system of claim 1, wherein the tool is for accepting an order from the user for the lighting system.

11. The system of claim 10, wherein the tool is for providing tracking information to the user to allow the user to track the order for the lighting system.

12. The system of claim 1, wherein the tool is for providing status information to the user to allow the user to monitor installation of the lighting system.

13. The system of claim 1, wherein the design center is for receiving an image of a background scene uploaded by the user.

14. The system of claim 1, wherein the design center includes images of outdoor lighting equipment.

15. The system of claim 1, wherein the design center includes images of indoor lighting equipment.

16. The system of claim 1, wherein the design center is operative for viewing a selected lighting component with a selected background image scene and for interchanging the selected lighting component with a second lighting component so that the second lighting component may be viewed with the selected background scene.

17. The system of claim 1, wherein the design center is operative for viewing a selected lighting component with a selected background image scene and for interchanging

the selected background scene with a second background scene so that the selected lighting component may be viewed with the second background scene.

18. A method for assisting a user in developing a lighting system for a lighting project, comprising:

obtaining from the user an identification of a type of the lighting project;

obtaining from the user characteristics of the lighting project;

obtaining from the user a set of criteria that the lighting system should satisfy;

in response to the identification of the type, the characteristics, and the set of criteria, presenting at least one component for the lighting system; and

prompting submission of a request for a proposal for the lighting system.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the at least one component for the lighting system comprises a plurality of components for the lighting system.

20. The method of claim 19, further comprising providing a first set of photometric data for a first component and a second set of photometric data for a second component, whereby the user may compare the first and second sets of photometric data.

21. The method of claim 19, further comprising providing a first set of financial data for a first component and a second set of financial data for a second component, whereby the user may compare the first and second sets of financial data.

22. The method of claim 19, further comprising visually comparing a first component and a second component.

23. The method of claim 18, further comprising prompting submission of a copy of a site plan for the lighting project.

24. The method of claim 18, further comprising posting the proposal for viewing over a computer network.

25. The method of claim 18, further comprising providing notification that the proposal is complete.

26. A system for assisting a user in developing a lighting system for a lighting project, comprising:

a plurality of images of background scenes, wherein any of the plurality of images of background scenes may be selected for display; and

a plurality of images of lighting components, wherein any of the plurality of images of lighting components may be selected for display within any of the plurality of images of background scenes;

wherein a selected background scene image or a selected lighting component image may be interchanged to view various combinations of lighting components and background scenes.

27. The system of claim 26, wherein the selected lighting component image may be moved within the selected background scene image.

28. The system of claim 26, wherein the selected lighting component image may be resized within the selected background scene image.

29. The system of claim 26, further comprising a tool allowing for a background scene image to be uploaded into the plurality of images of background scenes.

30. The system of claim 26, wherein the plurality of images of lighting components comprises images of indoor lighting equipment.

31. The system of claim 26, wherein the plurality of images of lighting components comprises images of outdoor lighting equipment.